

their vulnerability and dependability on computers in a way they never understood before and that the investment of bringing everything up to the highest possible level is an investment that will pay significant financial dividends for the economy in the years ahead.

So as I look back on those activities and those accomplishments, I express satisfaction for the work of the committee, a degree of satisfaction for whatever contribution I may have been able to make as its chairman but ultimately enormous gratitude to the members of the committee and to the members of the staff.

When Senator DODD and I were appointed, respectively, as vice chairman and chairman of this group, we made the determination we would not have a partisan staff. While it was partisan in the formal sense that there was a minority director and so on, it was housed in the same facility; the members of the staff were majority or minority and worked together on a daily basis. We had a number of detailees from a variety of agencies who came to us and brought a level of professional expertise we could never have achieved in any other way. We maintained throughout the entire exercise a determination to get the job done that was not interfered with by any attempt at staff bickering or posturing for any partisan purposes.

I pay tribute to Senator DODD for his willingness to join me and, indeed, for his leadership in pushing me in that direction, and to the people whom he appointed as minority members of the staff. I also pay tribute to the administration and John Koskinen, who held the position on behalf of the President. There, also, there was no partisanship and no posturing for any partisan advantage.

For the sake of the record, I want to read into the RECORD the names of the staffers who helped us with this accomplishment. They are: Robert Cresanti, staff director. Before being staff director, he worked with me on the Banking Committee to raise the initial alarm with respect to this possibility. T.M. Wilke Green, appointed by Senator DODD as minority staff director; John B. Stephenson, who came from the GAO, the deputy staff director. Then we had Thomas Bello, professional staff; Tania Calhoun, committee counsel; James P. Dailey, professional staff; Paul Hunter, professional staff—these people were absolutely magnificent in the degree of expertise and professionalism they brought to us—Unice Lieberman, minority press secretary; Sara Jane MacKay, legislative correspondent; Don Meyer, press secretary; J. Paul Nicholas, professional staff; Frank Reilly, professional staff; Noelle Busk Ringel, our archivist. The clerk was Amber Sechrist, who came out of my office in a very professional and solid way. We also had Ronald Spear, professional staff, and Deborah Steward, GPO representative.

To all of these men and women, I pay tribute and extend my warmest thanks and gratitude for the work they have done. Tomorrow, off the presses will come "Y2K Aftermath—Crisis Averted, Final Committee Report." With the issuance of this report, the committee no longer exists. But as Secretary Hamre, Chairman Greenspan, and others have said, the benefits of the committee will live on over and above whatever benefits we had for averting the crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

COMMENDING THE Y2K SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I am pleased to have been here as Senator BENNETT presented his report. He does deserve the credit he has rightly claimed, and his committee has done its work very well. I am most pleased to be able to congratulate him for a job well done.

GENERAL JOE RALSTON

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, later today I will join Senators IONUYE, WARNER and LEVIN in hosting a reception to bid farewell to Joe and Dede Ralston, as General Ralston concludes his second tour as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Happily, this event does not signify General Ralston's retirement, but his advancement to the position of Supreme Allied Commander Europe, in charge of all NATO forces, and all U.S. Forces stationed in Europe.

Joe Ralston has pursued a career of firsts, and breakthrough leadership success. His assignment as the first Air Force officer to command NATO is typical, and indicative, of his tremendous talents, and force of personality.

Remarkably, Joe Ralston has achieved success in several distinct military disciplines over his career, spanning more than 34 years.

Joe Ralston's military career is founded in his experience as a combat and command pilot during the Vietnam war. During two combat tours, in F-105 fighters and F-105 wild weasel jets, Joe honed his warfighting skills.

In the 1980's and early 1990's General Ralston played a key role in the technological revolution in air warfare. While many of these programs are still very sensitive, the direct impact of General Ralston's service in technology development and acquisition played a prominent role in our victories in Desert Storm and Kosovo.

Moving into more senior leadership positions, General Ralston contributed to reorganization of the Air Force during his tenure as commander of the 11th Air Force, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff of Plans and Operations and Commander of the Air Combat Command.

Most recently, General Ralston served with great distinction as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Over these past four years, General Ralston has left an indelible mark on our nation's military, now, and for many years ahead.

An architect of the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, General Ralston helped shape the force structure and training doctrine now followed by our Nation's Armed Forces.

The modernization plan presented in the QDR has moved us forward on recapitalizing our air and naval forces, and achieving Secretary Cohen's goal of \$60 billion for procurement for FY 2001.

These accomplishments proceeded during a period of overseas military activity across the globe unmatched since the end of the Second World War.

My colleagues here recognize that I have not always supported this administration's policies in the deployment of U.S. Forces overseas.

Regardless of how and why those deployments commenced, the performance and success of the U.S. military in these assignments reflects the leadership that General Ralston and all the Joint Chiefs have provided.

Looking ahead, to the continued opportunity for service General Ralston has accepted in moving to the Supreme Allied Commander job, this will be his toughest challenge.

General Ralston proceeds to Brussels following another great American Commander, General Wes Clark.

Having visited General Clark many times at his headquarters, and in the Balkans, there is no question that he provided the glue that held the alliance together in Bosnia and Kosovo.

General Clark did so facing limitations unlike those encountered by any previous alliance commander. He merits our accolades.

General Ralston succeeds General Clark in an era where our allies must decide the nature of their military forces in the future, and the role of Europe, compared to NATO, in future security matters.

To me, there is no officer in the U.S. military today better prepared, by experience or temperament, to accept this challenge.

While that is a strong claim, I make this comment to the Senate based on my personal experience in watching General Ralston command.

Catherine and I have known Joe and Dede Ralston since 1992, when they arrived in Alaska to take on the responsibility of commanding all U.S. military forces in my State.

Joe immediately established himself as not just a military commander, but a real Alaskan.

In fact, as Joe and Dede saw the close of this assignment as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs approaching, they made plans to establish a home in Alaska—coming home as neighbors.

While disappointed that we cannot look forward to their imminent return to Alaska, I join all Alaskans in congratulating General Ralston on the successful conclusion of his tenure as

Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and wishing him well as he proceeds to this next position of military and diplomatic responsibility.

I am confident that I can also speak for my colleagues here in the Senate in that wish, and commitment to work with General Ralston to meet the needs of our own military forces in Europe, and foster continued close ties with NATO.

Let me also take one moment to welcome General Ralston's successor as Vice Chairman, General Dick Myers.

Senator INOUE and I enjoyed a close relationship with General Myers during his tenure as commander of the Pacific Air Forces, which included units in our States of Alaska and Hawaii.

Most recently, General Myers served as Commander in Chief of the U.S. Space Command. I know he will bring the same skills and judgment to this position that he demonstrated in these earlier assignments.

All Senators are invited to the reception at 5 p.m. this afternoon in S-128, in honor of the conclusion of General Ralston's tenure as Vice Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to take just a few minutes to express why so many of us are sad to see Joe and Dede leave Washington, but proud of their service, and the new challenges they will assume on behalf of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Iowa for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

ENERGY PRICES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, presently we are experiencing the country's highest petroleum prices this decade. And there is every indication the price is going to go higher and higher. I think we need to start looking at why and not look at where to place blame. I think we have to find a common sense solution to the situation because it's not going to get any better in the short term even if OPEC decides to pump more oil and ship more oil to the United States. The fact of the matter is that regardless whether OPEC complies with our wishes there are still two reasons we are bound to face a similar dilemma again in the future.

The No. 1 reason is that the United States and other energy-consuming nations are going to continue to consume a greater amount of gasoline and petroleum products over the next several decades. The demand is going to increase.

The second reason is that as long as OPEC remains a powerful cartel willing to violate the principles of a free marketplace and continue its stranglehold on the production of oil, it will be able to radically effect our economy and financial stability.

As I look at how this administration is responding to the high price of oil,

all I can see is that Secretary of Energy Richardson has been dispatched to the various oil-producing nations. The administration in a sense is having the Secretary get down on his knees and beg for OPEC nations to produce more oil. Even if he is successful—some indications are that he might be to the tune of 1 million or 1½ million barrels—it is going to be another 60 days before that oil makes any impact on the price of gasoline at the pump in my State of Iowa or anyplace in the United States. Regardless of whether he is successful or not, this is a pretty poor energy policy.

Every time the price of oil gets so high that administration sends the Secretary of Energy around to beg for more oil to be produced, we ought to be looking at what we can do to be energy independent. This sort of extreme energy policy that President Clinton has seemingly implemented is gouging the consumers of America.

One example of something the President could do right now would be to develop greater reliance upon alternative energy and renewable sources. The President should be relying upon the ethanol and other renewable fuels instead of the ability of his Energy Secretary to be persuasive.

I am not only speaking for the economy of my State when I make this point about ethanol. I am talking about all renewable fuels. Ethanol is one of those renewable fuels. The reason I continue to hound the administration about ethanol is that right now the Environmental Protection Agency has an opportunity, if the President would bring it to their attention—and I called upon him in a letter last year to do this—to eliminate MTBE from gasoline nationwide and replace it with ethanol.

MTBE, a nonrenewable source of oxygenated fuel which is a competitor to ethanol, is already documented as poisoning water and has been outlawed in the State of California. The EPA should make the decision that MTBE ought to be outlawed in all 50 States, as the Governor of California has decided to do in the State of California. This action would encourage the production of ethanol and fill the void which MTBE has left in California.

The amount of ethanol that could be marketed in California is equal to the use of ethanol in all 50 States right now. The President, in making that decision, would be able to not only continue to use oxygenated fuel to clean up the air, he could also help agriculture, create new jobs, and make us less dependent upon foreign sources of oil, which strengthens our economy and national security. Obviously, since one-third of our trade deficit comes from the importation of oil, he would also reduce our trade deficit by relying on renewable fuels. But the most important aspect is that to the extent which we rely on domestically produced renewable sources of energy, we would not be forced to plead with

OPEC every time they meet and decide they are going to gouge the American consumer.

Just the fact that the members of OPEC, many being Arab nations, agreed to reduce production and dramatically increase our cost bothers me tremendously. Is this how they show their respect for the Americans who shed their blood in the Persian Gulf war so that the region would not be dominated by Saddam Hussein? This surely is true of Kuwait, the third leading exporter of oil in the world. Kuwait ought to show a little sense of gratitude to the American military and American taxpayers for saving them from that sort of dominance. But this only goes to show me we are actually dealing with a domestic problem. We seemingly cannot force OPEC to act reasonable, because if these nations want to continue their monopolistic practice, unless we are willing to take retaliatory action, we are going to be beholden to them. Consequently, this extreme policy of having no domestic policy on energy is devastating the consumers of America. We need to have that reliance upon alternative fuels.

Another glaring problem with the Administration's energy policy is their policy has reduced the domestic production of energy, oil, natural gas, et cetera, by limiting the areas in the United States where exploration can take place.

If they had anticipated \$30 oil, I don't think they would have followed that policy. They had other thoughts in mind when they adopted that policy and restricted the exploration of oil. Consequently, they have put the United States in a position where we have not had much drilling going on in the continental U.S. or offshore. Now we are paying the price.

In addition, there is a lot of regulatory red tape involved with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. One of the pipeline companies put in an application to build a pipeline to the Northeast. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission put so many conditions upon the building of that pipeline, it became too costly and the pipeline company decided not to build.

If one wonders why the price is \$2 a gallon for heating oil in New England—when a year ago it was only about 60 cents—it is because of a regulatory policy that makes it almost impossible for people who are willing to invest to derive economic benefit from their investment.

We ought to look at some of the regulations of this administration that tend to discourage exploration, that prohibit exploration, or that have made it very difficult to deliver the product from the refineries to the consumers.

OPEC's attempt to drive up the price of oil, at great cost to the US consumer, is causing economic instability which also serves to injure our national security. The United States has long been the locomotive preserving